



EUPHEMA CHRYSOSTOMA: Wagl.

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# EUPHEMA CHRYSOSTOMA, *Wagl.*

## Blue-Banded Grass-Parrakeet.

*Psittacus chrysostomus*, Kuhl, Consp. in Psitt. in Nova Acta, vol. x. p. 58, pl. 1.

*Psittacus venustus*, Temm. in Linn. Trans., vol. xiii. p. 121.

*Blue-banded Parrakeet*, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. ii. p. 188.

*Nanodes venustus*, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 274.—Selby, Nat. Lib. Parrots, p. 172, pl. 27.—

Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Zool., vol. xiv. p. 118, pl. 15.—Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 305.—

Gould, Syn. Birds of Australia, Part II.

*Euphema chrysostoma*, Wagl. Mon. Psitt. in Abhand., vol. i. pp. 492, 544, and 707.

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THIS bird is a summer resident in Van Diemen's Land, arriving in September and departing again in February and March. During its sojourn it takes up its abode in such open and thinly-timbered localities as are favourable for the growth of various kinds of grasses, upon the seeds of which it almost solely subsists. Among the places in which I observed it to be most abundant were Bruni Island, Sandy Bay immediately adjoining Hobart Town, New Norfolk, Spring Hill in the interior, the banks of the Tamar, and on Flinder's Island in Bass's Straits. At Spring Hill, in the month of January, it was more numerous and congregated in larger flocks than in any other locality I had visited, flights being constantly passing backwards and forwards from the hills to the margins of some cultivated lands from which the corn had recently been carried, the borders of which not having been disturbed were clothed with abundance of grasses in full seed. A great number of those seen here and at Flinder's Island were young birds which were doubtless congregating previous to their autumnal migration; the direction they take, or the country they proceed to, is still a matter of uncertainty: in all probability they pass directly northwards to some part of the Australian continent, but I was unable to satisfy myself on this point, or to obtain any decided information respecting them, and I never even saw the species on the mainland.

The Blue-banded Grass-Parrakeet is one of the most beautiful and interesting of the *Psittacidae*; for whether perched on the small dead branches of a low bush, which it often is, or resting upon the stronger grasses, as represented in the Plate, there is grace and elegance in all its actions. It runs over the ground and threads its way among the grasses with the greatest facility, and is usually so intent upon gathering the seeds, as to admit of your walking close up to a flock before it will rise; the whole will then get up simultaneously, uttering at the same time a feeble cry and settling again at a short distance, or flying off to some thickly-foliaged tree, where it sits for a time and then descends again to the ground.

Its flight is remarkably quick, and is performed in a manner somewhat resembling that of the Snipe; while on the wing the deep blue colouring of the shoulder forms a conspicuous contrast to the yellow and green of the body.

The breeding-season is at its height in October and November; the eggs, as I have been informed, being usually deposited in the holes of the *Eucalypti*, but occasionally in the hollow trunks of the fallen trees: they vary from five to seven in number, and are perfectly white.

The sexes present no observable difference; but the young, like those of the *Platycerci*, have the bill and nostrils of a delicate yellow, the band on the forehead less conspicuous, and the plumage, although with the same tints as in the adult, much less brilliant in its colouring.

Like nearly all the other members of the family, it is capable of perfect domestication, and a more elegant or beautiful pet can scarcely be conceived; and that it would thrive in this country is certain, as I had a living example in my possession a few years since which was remarkably healthy and active.

A conspicuous band of deep indigo-blue across the forehead, bordered above by a narrow edging of light metallic blue; lores, and a stripe behind the eye, rich yellow; crown of the head, back, rump, upper tail-coverts, throat, chest and flanks brownish olive-green; shoulders and wing-coverts deep blue; primaries black, the outer edges of the first three or four slightly tinged with bluish green; centre of the abdomen and under tail-coverts yellow; four middle tail-feathers greenish blue; the basal portions of the remainder beautiful blue on their outer edges, and largely tipped with fine yellow; irides, bill and feet brown.

The figures are of the natural size.